

Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2006
10:30am

Members Present: Connie Hickman Tanner, Paul Kelly David Tindall, Consuella James, Bruce Cohen, Gary Ewart, Pat Page, Pamela Taylor, Sandi

Secretary Pamela Taylor missed the beginning of the meeting. Ms. Taylor started recording minutes once she arrived.

Ms. Tanner stated that she was concerned if DCFS policy would help or hinder the board's decision on certain issues.

Ms. Page asked for possible recommendations for staffing and retention issues. Ms. Tanner asked if there were system issues or people issues with staffing and retention issues. Ms. Sandi stated that it has helped that supervisors know exactly what is required to send a hire packet up.

Mr. Cohen stated that he has used a quality improvement tool known as the Root Cause Analysis to help him look at people, system, and environment issues. Ms. Cohen stated that it forces you to dissect an issue and find the root cause of that issue. Mr. Cohen suggested that the Advisory Board look at using this tool with each committee. Ms. Sandi stated that we could try the improvement tool just to see what happens. The Board agreed that the committees should try the tool.

Mr. Tindall wanted to know the exact function of the Advisory Board as it relates to staffing and retention of DCFS staff. Ms. Page stated that the Advisory Board would look at key issues regarding the hiring process and retention of employees and make recommendations to the executive staff. Ms. Tanner stated that the committee would also identify any policies, laws, practice barriers that could affect the hiring process of DCFS. Ms. James stated that the most critical barrier right now is retention.

Mr. Kelly stated that the large Advisory Board should only meet when there is a decision to be made. Mr. Kelly stated that the sub-committees be given lead way in making decisions and report their progress to the Advisory Board.

Ms. Tanner stated that there are still barriers with recruitment. Mr. Gary Ewart stated that the hiring process seemed to be speeding up compared to pass hiring procedures. Mr. David Tindall asked that the board look into what is causing that.

Ms. Sandi stated that the biggest area of concern was getting practice to match policy.

Ms. Tanner asked what red flags was being looked at when it comes losing staff? Ms. Sandi stated that an automatic email goes out to Executive staff when a crisis is taking place. Ms. Tanner stated that she does not feel that that information is being shared with the Area Managers.

Mr. Ewart stated that the information is being shared but the Area Managers are still doing case management because of shortage of staff issues.

Ms. James stated that she feels that crisis arise because people are not being held accountable for their actions not because of lack of communication.

Mr. Cohen stated that when you have a lot of turnovers you lose knowledge.

Ms. Sandi suggested that Executive staff re-look at the Policy Manual to see if it is user friendly.

Mr. Tindall stated that if we had a list of issues that needed to be addressed that the committees could rate them from greatest to least areas of concern. Mr. Tindall stated that the Advisory Board could prioritize them for a larger group to look at.

Ms. Sandi suggested that the Staffing and Retention Committee look at what other states are doing or have done to make things run smoother with their staffing issues. Ms. James agreed with Ms. Sandi and stated that in the past thirty years, DCFS has grown, but problems are still here.

Ms. Tanner suggested that the Advisory Board have the Child Welfare League come in and inform the board what other states are doing to better their agency.

Mr. Cohen stated that the Advisory Board should create a process to help with the hiring and retention of our staff. Mr. Cohen stated that we either have the wisdom to do it or network it out.

Mr. Kelly stated that he did not want the Board creating a lot of busy work that it does not need. Mr. Kelly stated that he wanted the Board to really make a difference, not just create more havoc for the members.

Ms. Page stated that there were two items she wanted to discuss and that was list serve and a point person for the Advisory Board and sub-committees.

Ms. Sandi stated that she feels that a list serve would not meet the need of the Advisory Board. Ms. James stated that she thought that it would. The Board decided to have a list serve.

Ms. Page stated that the Board needed a point person. Ms. Page stated that this person would be the go-to-person. Ms. Page stated that this person would keep up with the list serve and make sure that all information and minutes of the Advisory Board be kept on the DCFS web site. Ms. Page appointed Ms. Sandi to be the point person.

Ms. Page stated that there are three things the Advisory Board brings to the table: Knowledge, Prodding and an Outside Point of View.

Mr. Kelly asked if the foster parents would have a list serve also so that they could educate the public on certain views. Ms. Page stated that we would have access to foster parents so that we can educate them on what is going on with the Advisory Board.

Ms. Page stated that CASA and foster parents are the two most important people to help educate the public.

The meeting was adjourned and the next Big Advisory Board meeting will take place February 9, 2007 at 2pm.